

Exemptions

WAC 173-27-040 Developments exempt from substantial development permit requirement.

(1) Application and interpretation of exemptions.

- a) Exemptions shall be construed narrowly. Only those developments that meet the precise terms of one or more of the listed exemptions may be granted exemption from the substantial development permit process.
- b) An exemption from the substantial development permit process is not an exemption from compliance with the act or the local management program, nor from any other regulatory requirements. To be authorized, all uses and developments must be consistent with the policies and provisions of the applicable management program and the Shoreline Management Act. A development or use that is listed as a conditional use pursuant to the local management program or is an unlisted use, must obtain a conditional use permit even though the development or use does not require a substantial development permit. When a development or use is proposed that does not comply with the bulk, dimensional and performance standards of the master program, such development or use can only be authorized by approval of a variance.
- c) The burden of proof that a development or use is exempt from the permit process is on the applicant.
- d) If any part of a proposed development is not eligible for exemption, then a substantial development permit is required for the entire proposed development project.
- e) Local government may attach conditions to the approval of exempted developments and/or uses as necessary to assure consistency of the project with the act and the local management program.

(2) The following developments shall not require substantial development permits:

- a) Any development of which the total cost or fair market value, whichever is higher, does not exceed five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), if such development does not materially interfere with the normal public use of the water or shorelines of the state. For purposes of determining whether or not a permit is required, the total cost or fair market value shall be based on the value of development that is occurring on shorelines of the state as defined in RCW 90.58.030(2)(c). The total cost or fair market value of the development shall include the fair market value of any donated, contributed or found labor, equipment or materials; (Amended by House Bill 2623, Effective June 13, 2002)
- b) Normal maintenance or repair of existing structures or developments, including damage by accident, fire or elements. "Normal maintenance" includes those usual acts to prevent a decline, lapse, or cessation from a lawfully established condition. "Normal repair" means to restore a development to a state comparable to its original condition, including but not limited to its size, shape, configuration, location and external appearance, within a reasonable period after decay or partial destruction, except where repair causes substantial adverse effects to shoreline resource or environment. Replacement of a structure or development may be authorized as repair where such replacement is the common method of repair for the type of structure or development and the replacement structure or development is comparable to the original structure or development including but not limited to its size, shape, configuration, location and external

appearance and the replacement does not cause substantial adverse effects to shoreline resources or environment;

- c) Construction of the normal protective bulkhead common to single-family residences. A "normal protective" bulkhead includes those structural and nonstructural developments installed at or near, and parallel to, the ordinary high water mark for the sole purpose of protecting an existing single-family residence and appurtenant structures from loss or damage by erosion. A normal protective bulkhead is not exempt if constructed for the purpose of creating dry land. When a vertical or near vertical wall is being constructed or reconstructed, not more than one cubic yard of fill per one foot of wall may be used as backfill. When an existing bulkhead is being repaired by construction of a vertical wall fronting the existing wall, it shall be constructed no further waterward of the existing bulkhead than is necessary for construction of new footings. When a bulkhead has deteriorated such that an ordinary high water mark has been established by the presence and action of water landward of the bulkhead then the replacement bulkhead must be located at or near the actual ordinary high water mark. Beach nourishment and bioengineered erosion control projects may be considered a normal protective bulkhead when any structural elements are consistent with the above requirements and when the project has been approved by the department of fish and wildlife.
- d) Emergency construction necessary to protect property from damage by the elements. An "emergency" is an unanticipated and imminent threat to public health, safety, or the environment which requires immediate action within a time too short to allow full compliance with this chapter. Emergency construction does not include development of new permanent protective structures where none previously existed. Where new protective structures are deemed by the administrator to be the appropriate means to address the emergency situation, upon abatement of the emergency situation the new structure shall be removed or any permit which would have been required, absent an emergency, pursuant to chapter 90.58 RCW, these regulations, or the local master program, obtained. All emergency construction shall be consistent with the policies of chapter 90.58 RCW and the local master program. As a general matter, flooding or other seasonal events that can be anticipated and may occur but that are not imminent are not an emergency;
- e) Construction and practices normal or necessary for farming, irrigation, and ranching activities, including agricultural service roads and utilities on shorelands, construction of a barn or similar agricultural structure, and the construction and maintenance of irrigation structures including but not limited to head gates, pumping facilities, and irrigation channels: Provided, That a feedlot of any size, all processing plants, other activities of a commercial nature, alteration of the contour of the shorelands by leveling or filling other than that which results from normal cultivation, shall not be considered normal or necessary farming or ranching activities. A feedlot shall be an enclosure or facility used or capable of being used for feeding livestock hay, grain, silage, or other livestock feed, but shall not include land for growing crops or vegetation for livestock feeding and/or grazing, nor shall it include normal livestock wintering operations;
- f) Construction or modification, by or under the authority of the Coast Guard or a designated port management authority, of navigational aids such as channel markers and anchor buoys;
- g) Construction on shorelands by an owner, lessee or contract purchaser of a single-family residence for their own use or for the use of their family, which residence does not exceed a height of thirty-five feet above average grade

level and which meets all requirements of the state agency or local government having jurisdiction thereof. "Single-family residence" means a detached dwelling designed for and occupied by one family including those structures and developments within a contiguous ownership which are a normal appurtenance. An "appurtenance" is necessarily connected to the use and enjoyment of a single-family residence and is located landward of the ordinary high water mark and the perimeter of a wetland. On a state-wide basis, normal appurtenances include a garage; deck; driveway; utilities; fences; installation of a septic tank and drain field and grading which does not exceed two hundred fifty cubic yards and which does not involve placement of fill in any wetland or waterward of the ordinary high water mark. Local circumstances may dictate additional interpretations of normal appurtenances which shall be set forth and regulated within the applicable master program. Construction authorized under this exemption shall be located landward of the ordinary high water mark;

- h) Construction of a dock, including a community dock, designed for pleasure craft only, for the private noncommercial use of the owners, lessee, or contract purchaser of a single-family and multiple-family residences. A dock is a landing and moorage facility for watercraft and does not include recreational decks, storage facilities or other appurtenances. This exception applies if either:
 - i) In salt waters, the fair market value of the dock does not exceed two thousand five hundred dollars; or
 - j) (ii) In fresh waters the fair market value of the dock does not exceed ten thousand dollars, but if subsequent construction having a fair market value exceeding two thousand five hundred dollars occurs within five years of completion of the prior construction, the subsequent construction shall be considered a substantial development for the purpose of this chapter.
- k) For purposes of this section salt water shall include the tidally influenced marine and estuarine water areas of the state including the Pacific Ocean, Strait of Juan de Fuca, Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound and all bays and inlets associated with any of the above;
- l) Operation, maintenance, or construction of canals, waterways, drains, reservoirs, or other facilities that now exist or are hereafter created or developed as a part of an irrigation system for the primary purpose of making use of system waters, including return flow and artificially stored ground water from the irrigation of lands;
- m) The marking of property lines or corners on state-owned lands, when such marking does not significantly interfere with normal public use of the surface of the water;
- n) Operation and maintenance of any system of dikes, ditches, drains, or other facilities existing on June 4, 1975, which were created, developed or utilized primarily as a part of an agricultural drainage or diking system;
- o) Any project with a certification from the governor pursuant to chapter 80.50 RCW;
- p) Site exploration and investigation activities that are prerequisite to preparation of an application for development authorization under this chapter, if:
 - (i) The activity does not interfere with the normal public use of the surface waters;
 - (ii) The activity will have no significant adverse impact on the environment including but not limited to fish, wildlife, fish or wildlife habitat, water quality, and aesthetic values;

- (iii) The activity does not involve the installation of any structure, and upon completion of the activity the vegetation and land configuration of the site are restored to conditions existing before the activity;
 - (iv) A private entity seeking development authorization under this section first posts a performance bond or provides other evidence of financial responsibility to the local jurisdiction to ensure that the site is restored to preexisting conditions; and
 - (v) The activity is not subject to the permit requirements of RCW 90.58.550;
- q) The process of removing or controlling aquatic noxious weeds, as defined in RCW 17.26.020, through the use of an herbicide or other treatment methods applicable to weed control that are recommended by a final environmental impact statement published by the department of agriculture or the department of ecology jointly with other state agencies under chapter 43.21C RCW;
- r) Watershed restoration projects as defined herein. Local government shall review the projects for consistency with the shoreline master program in an expeditious manner and shall issue its decision along with any conditions within forty-five days of receiving all materials necessary to review the request for exemption from the applicant. No fee may be charged for accepting and processing requests for exemption for watershed restoration projects as used in this section.
 - (i) "Watershed restoration project" means a public or private project authorized by the sponsor of a watershed restoration plan that implements the plan or a part of the plan and consists of one or more of the following activities:
 - i. A project that involves less than ten miles of stream reach, in which less than twenty-five cubic yards of sand, gravel, or soil is removed, imported, disturbed or discharged, and in which no existing vegetation is removed except as minimally necessary to facilitate additional plantings;
 - ii. A project for the restoration of an eroded or unstable stream bank that employs the principles of bioengineering, including limited use of rock as a stabilization only at the toe of the bank, and with primary emphasis on using native vegetation to control the erosive forces of flowing water; or
 - iii. A project primarily designed to improve fish and wildlife habitat, remove or reduce impediments to migration of fish, or enhance the fishery resource available for use by all of the citizens of the state, provided that any structure, other than a bridge or culvert or in stream habitat enhancement structure associated with the project, is less than two hundred square feet in floor area and is located above the ordinary high water mark of the stream.
 - (ii) "Watershed restoration plan" means a plan, developed or sponsored by the department of fish and wildlife, the department of ecology, the department of natural resources, the department of transportation, a federally recognized Indian tribe acting within and pursuant to its authority, a city, a county, or a conservation district that provides a general program and implementation measures or actions for the preservation, restoration, re-creation, or enhancement of the natural resources, character, and ecology of a

stream, stream segment, drainage area, or watershed for which agency and public review has been conducted pursuant to chapter 43.21C RCW, the State Environmental Policy Act;

- s) A public or private project, the primary purpose of which is to improve fish or wildlife habitat or fish passage, when all of the following apply:
- t) The project has been approved in writing by the department of fish and wildlife as necessary for the improvement of the habitat or passage and appropriately designed and sited to accomplish the intended purpose;
- u) The project has received hydraulic project approval by the department of fish and wildlife pursuant to chapter 75.20 RCW; and
- v) The local government has determined that the project is consistent with the local shoreline master program. The local government shall make such determination in a timely manner and provide it by letter to the project proponent.

(3) Hazardous substance remedial actions. The procedural requirements of chapter 90.58 RCW shall not apply to a project for which a consent decree, order or agreed order has been issued pursuant to chapter 70.105D RCW or to the department of ecology when it conducts a remedial action under chapter 70.105D RCW. The department shall, in consultation with the appropriate local government, assure that such projects comply with the substantive requirements of chapter 90.58 RCW, chapter 173-26 WAC and the local management program.